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1921









OLD
TOWER
PLAYS

LITTLE JOHN AND
THE MILLER JOIN
ROBIN HOOD'S BAND

LITTLE JOHN AND THE MILLER JOIN ROBIN HOOD'S BAND

A Play in Two Scenes
for Boys

By
PERRY BOYER CORNEAU

OLD TOWER PLAYS
CHICAGO

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1921

Presented for the first time at the
Childrens Civic Theatre
Municipal Pier, Chicago
1920



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PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

ROBIN HOOD

THE MILLER OF NOTTINGHAM

LITTLE JOHN

WILL STUTELY

A LAME BEGGAR

A BLIND BEGGAR

A DEAF BEGGAR

A BOY (Fisherman)

FOLLOWERS (Of Robin Hood,
members of his band.)

The play is based on the old ballads, in Ritson's collection, of "Robin Hood and Little John," and "Little John and the Four Beggars."

Where scenery that is at all realistic is used it will be better to begin the second scene with the entrance of Little John, omitting the episode of the boy catching a fish. Its purpose is only to show that there is supposed to be water beneath the bridge where the conditions of production are such that it would otherwise be obvious that there is no water there.

LITTLE JOHN AND THE MILLER OF
NOTTINGHAM JOIN ROBIN
HOOD'S BAND
SCENE ONE

SCENE: The edge of Sherwood Forest.

Robin Hood, Will Stutely, and Followers are lying asleep on the grass. Robin Hood wakes. He rises, and going to Will Stutely, shakes him. Will turns over, muttering in his sleep. Robin shakes him again.

ROBIN

Will Stutely!

WILL

Go away!!

ROBIN

Get up. It is growing late. The sun is already above the tree tops of Sherwood.

WILL

Ugh!! Go away!!

ROBIN

(Shaking him again.)

Come — — — come — — —

WILL

(Only half awake. Striking out and hitting Robin.)

Go away!!!

ROBIN

(Springing up and drawing his dagger.)

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Stutely, for that blow you are like to sleep till doomsday!

(Will Stutely wakes and recognizes Robin.)

WILL

(Falling on his knees in terror.)

Robin Hood! Master! — — — I struck you?! O Master, pardon!

ROBIN

(Putting away his dagger.)

I pardon you. But if you could strike such a blow, Will, being awake, as you can in your sleep you would be a mighty fighter, indeed. — — — Come now. Waken the others. — — — What a band have I! For eating and sleeping they have not their match in all merry England.

(Robin and Will go about waking the Followers. They rise and gather about Robin.)

WILL

Now, Master, give us our orders for the day.

ROBIN

We have but scant store of venison Go, all of you, deep into Sherwood and bring tonight to the feasting place a stout brace of the King's deer. — — — Will, remain with me. We will go Nottingham way and purchase good buttermilk and cheese — — — and perhaps come by an honest penny

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or so on our way.

(All go out, except Robin and Will, who sit down to mend their bows and arrows.)

WILL

Master, look! Three men coming along the road.

ROBIN

Quick! Behind the bushes till we see what manner of men they are.

(Robin and Will hide behind the bushes. The Lame Beggar, the Blind Beggar and the Deaf Beggar enter. They stop and hold out their hands.)

BLIND BEGGAR

Help a poor bli-i-i-nd man!!

DEAF BEGGAR

Help a poor de-a-a-a-af man!!

LAME BEGGAR

Stop it! There is no one here to beg from.

BLIND BEGGAR

As we came along the road I thought I saw someone here.

DEAF BEGGAR

I was sure I hear voices.

LAME BEGGAR

You are not likely to find anyone here on the edge of Sherwood.

(Robin and Will look out from behind the bushes.)

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LAME BEGGAR

This is a lonely place. Let us count our gains and divide them into three equal parts as we agreed.

DEAF BEGGAR

Let us do so.

(They take out money, which they count and divide. As they do so it is evident from their manner that they are neither really blind, lame, or deaf. Robin and Will watch eagerly.)

LAME BEGGAR

Now each has his fair and equal portion. To-day we will go into Nottingham. And, God willing, we shall gather in as much again.

(The Miller is heard singing outside. The Beggars stand in line and try to look as wretched as possible. Robin and Will, who have come from their hiding place, go back quickly.)

(The Miller enters, singing, carrying a large sack of flour on his shoulder. The Beggars hold out their hands, begging.)

LAME BEGGAR

Help a poor la-a-a-ame man!!!

BLIND BEGGAR

Help a poor bli-i-i-i-ind man!!!

DEAF BEGGAR

Help a poor de-a-a-a-af man!!!

(The Miller stops in astonishment and sets down his sack of flour.)

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LAME BEGGAR

Help a poor la-a-a-a-ame man!!!

BLIND BEGGAR

Help a poor bli-i-i-i-ind man!!!

DEAF BEGGAR

Help a poor de-a-a-a-a-af man!!!

MILLER

Away! I have nothing to give you.

BEGGARS

la-a-a-a-a-ame

Help a poor — bli-i-i-i-i-ind man!!!!

de-a-a-a-a-af

(The Miller covers his ears with his hands.)

MILLER

Away, vagabonds! I am an honest miller.
I have nothing for such as you.

LAME BEGGAR

Suppose you were lame like me — — — ?

MILLER

I'd dance for my living.

BLIND BEGGAR

Suppose you were blind like me — — — ?

MILLER

I'd get a bow and arrow and shoot ducks.

DEAF BEGGAR

Suppose you were deaf like me — — — ?

MILLER

I'd play the flute for my living. You are
cheats, that's what you are!

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ROBIN

(In a rage, wading ashore and drawing his dagger.)

BEGGARS

Cheats!!!!

BLIND BEGGAR

(Raising his cane.)

I'll teach you to slander honest men!!

(The Miller snatches away the cane and knocks down the Lame Beggar and the Blind Beggar who lie on the ground howling and rubbing their heads. The Deaf Beggar runs away.)

MILLER

(Calling to Deaf Beggar.)

Stop! Come back.

(The Deaf Beggar returns and kneels, trembling, before the Miller.)

MILLER

You begged from me. Yet I'll warrant you three have more gold about you than ever I had in my life.

(Searching them and finding the money.)

Ha! I thought so.

BEGGARS

lame

Have mercy! I am blind !!!

deaf

MILLER

Now, you rascals, begone!

(He beats the Beggars, who run away howling.)

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MILLER

Ha! Ha! I have made the lame walk, the blind see, and the deaf hear!

(The Miller picks up his sack and goes out.)

(Robin and Will come out from their hiding place.)

ROBIN

Did you see that, Will Stutely?!

WILL

Gold — — — gold — — —.

ROBIN

Aye, gold. And we have sore need of gold, Will.

WILL

Robin, we have indeed.

ROBIN

Quick! Follow him.

WILL

Not I, Robin.

ROBIN

Do you not want his gold?

WILL

I do indeed want it. But taking it from him; that's another matter. He is a stout man, and all too ready at fighting.

ROBIN

We are two to one.

WILL

The beggars were three to one, Robin.

Little John and the Miller Join Robin Hood's Band

ROBIN

It were better we had more men for this business. Will, go you and find the others of our band. I will follow the miller. By forest paths I can arrive at the bridge across the stream before him. His sack of flour is heavy. He must stop often for rest. Bring the men thither. If he arrives before you I will delay him there till you come.

WILL

I shall have our men there with all speed, Master.

(Robin and Will go out, in different directions.)

END OF SCENE ONE.

SCENE TWO.

SCENE: The place where the road crosses the stream. On the right a small bridge. On the left the road and the grassy banks of the stream. At back and on the sides trees and bushes.

A Boy is seated on the bridge fishing. After a moment he pulls up his line and finds he has caught a fish. He then crosses the bridge and goes out.

A moment's interval.

Little John enters from the right and approaches the bridge. He is extremely tall and thin, and, while dressed in a somewhat similar manner to Robin Hood's men, is evidently not one of them. He wears a long black feather in his cap and carries a staff in his hand. From the arrogant manner in which he saunters toward the bridge it is evident that he has a very good opinion of himself.

Robin Hood, carrying bow, arrows, and horn, enters from the other side and also approaches the bridge.

They do not see each other until they are both on the bridge. They stop in surprise.

LITTLE JOHN

Ho. Stranger!

ROBIN HOOD
(Courteously.)

Good day to you.

LITTLE JOHN
(Arrogantly.)

Back and let me pass!

Little John and the Miller Join Robin Hood's Band

ROBIN

(After looking at him a moment in surprise, with rising anger.)

Never shall I move from this spot but to go forward.

LITTLE JOHN

Back! And quickly!

(Little John raises his staff threateningly.)

ROBIN

So?! I'll show you right Nottingham play, Stranger.

(Robin fits an arrow to his bow.)

LITTLE JOHN

None of that! Draw bow-string and you will bear the marks of my staff forever.

ROBIN

Fool! Before you could lift an arm my arrow would be in your heart. Back! If you care for life.

LITTLE JOHN

Now you are a coward indeed, I say. Were you armed only with a staff as I am I would make you sing a different tune.

ROBIN

Coward, am I?!

(He looks toward the bank.)

Wait where you are. I see a likely-looking piece of wood on the bank that will serve me for a staff. When I have done with you you will wish I had used my bow instead.

Little John and the Miller Join Robin Hood's Band

(Robin descends from the bridge. He lays his bow on the bank, and, picking up the staff, returns to the bridge and approaches Little John, who awaits him confidently.)

LITTLE JOHN

(Laughing derisively.)

Beware, Stranger! The stream is swift and deep.

ROBIN

You will find it so, Stranger. Ready?

LITTLE JOHN

With all my heart!

(They fight. Robin nearly loses his balance, but recovers it before Little John can strike. Little John does the same.)

LITTLE JOHN

(Striking Robin.)

A present for you!

ROBIN

(As he returns the blow.)

One in return!

(The fight continues. At last, on receiving an unusually hard blow, Robin, wildly trying to maintain his balance and his footing on the bridge, falls into the stream. Little John crosses the bridge and stands on the bank laughing.)

LITTLE JOHN

Ha! Ha! Good fellow, where are you now?!

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A thousand torments! I was like to have drowned. Stranger, this is an ill day for thee! Know that I am Robin Hood!

(Little John, astonished, stops laughing. Robin puts away his dagger and blows his horn. After an instant he blows again. Will comes running in from the woods on the opposite bank. He halts before the bridge and looks about. Then, seeing Robin, he mounts the bridge and crosses.)

WILL

(On the bridge.)

Master, are you in danger?

ROBIN

Yonder villain was like to have drowned me!

(Will turns toward the woods and beckons. The Followers enter and run across the bridge.)

WILL

(To Followers. Pointing to Little John.)

Seize him!

(The Followers rush upon Little John.)

WILL

Into the stream with him!

(They are about to throw Little John into the stream when Robin bursts out laughing and motions to them to stop.)

ROBIN

Stop! The stream is too damp and cold.
— — — — Stranger, you are a stout fellow
and a good fighter. Will you not join my

Little John and the Miller Join Robin Hood's Band

band? I will make you second in command over it.

LITTLE JOHN

Aye, surely will I join your band. But it seems to me I should be first, or at least equal in command.

ROBIN

What is that you say?!!

LITTLE JOHN

Have I not beaten you at quarter-staff? Am I not the better man?

ROBIN

Stranger, what is your name?

LITTLE JOHN

John Little is my name.

WILL

John Little! From the size of him he should be called rather Little John.

(All laugh and cry out "Little John! Little John!")

ROBIN

Little John, you would rule this band equally with me, or alone. It needs a strong arm. Your arm is strong indeed—as I well know.

(Robin rubs the spot where Little John hit him. All laugh.)

But it is the head that makes one fit to rule. If your mind be as good as your strong

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right arm I will yield you leadership readily indeed.

WILL

The Miller! We forgot the miller. Here he comes!

ROBIN

Prove now, Little John, the cunning of your brain. Hither comes a miller with a store of gold in the sack which he carries on his shoulder. Take Will Stutely and one other and set upon the miller and make him give up his gold. Not to rob him, but to show your skill. If you do this without mishap I shall know that maybe you are fit to equal me in leadership.

LITTLE JOHN

Why, that is easily done. And alone. I do not need the help of your two men.

ROBIN

The miller is a stout man. He has just beaten three as lusty beggars as I ever laid eyes on.

LITTLE JOHN

Let the two stay then.

ROBIN

Take this horn. And if you need my help blow it heartily.

LITTLE JOHN

I shall not need your help.

(Little John takes the horn nevertheless.)

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ROBIN

Quick, men, into the forest! You, Will, and you, remain with Little John. The rest with me.

(Will and the Follower addressed by Robin remain with Little John. Robin and the rest of the Followers go.)

(The Miller enters. He walks more slowly than before and is evidently hot and tired.)

LITTLE JOHN

Hold, miller!

(The Miller stops and sets down the sack in relief, glad of an excuse for resting and wiping perspiration and flour from his face.)

LITTLE JOHN

Your sack of flour is heavy, miller.

MILLER

Aye, it is that.

LITTLE JOHN

It might be there is more than flour in it.

MILLER

There might be — — — and there might not.

WILL

It would be well for us to see.

LITTLE JOHN

(To Follower.)

Empty the sack.

MILLER

No! No!! Do not empty it.

Little John and the Miller Join Robin Hood's Band

LITTLE JOHN

(To Follower.)

Empty the sack.

MILLER

I beseech you! I am only a poor miller. Do not waste my flour. It is true there is money in the sack, hidden in the flour. I will take it out for you. If you spill my flour I am ruined.

LITTLE JOHN

Why, take it out yourself then.

(The Miller bends over the sack and plunges both hands into it. Little John, Will, and the Follower lean over it, watching eagerly.)

WILL

Do you hear the gold pieces clinking?!

(Suddenly the Miller rises and throws two handfuls of flour into their faces. They jump about, howling, and rubbing their eyes.)

LITTLE JOHN—WILL—FOLLOWER

Ow!!! Ow!!! Murder!! Help!! Ow!!!!

(The Miller seizes a stick and beats them unmercifully.)

(Little John blows Robin's horn. Robin and Followers enter.)

MILLER

Robin Hood! It is your men I have beaten! Pardon! I would not knowingly harm any of your band. For you are the friend of all honest men.

Little John and the Miller Join Robin Hood's Band

ROBIN

They sought to play a joke on you, miller. You have paid them back soundly. You are a stout man indeed. Will you not join my band?

MILLER

It would be the happiest day of my life. Robin, had I known they wanted for you the gold I took from the three lusty beggars it would have been yours instantly.

(The Miller bends over his sack and plunges his hands into it again. All crowd around, expectantly. As he withdraws his hands Little John, Will and the Follower draw back hastily. But this time his hands are full of gold pieces.)

MILLER

Robin, these are yours.

ROBIN

No, miller, you won them fairly. Keep them.

MILLER

Then let one of your men take some of this money and go to some farmhouse and buy provisions for a feast.

(The Miller gives money to Follower, who goes out.)

ROBIN

Little John, are you satisfied now to be second in command?

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LITTLE JOHN

Aye, that I am, Master. If only you set me never again to rob an honest miller.

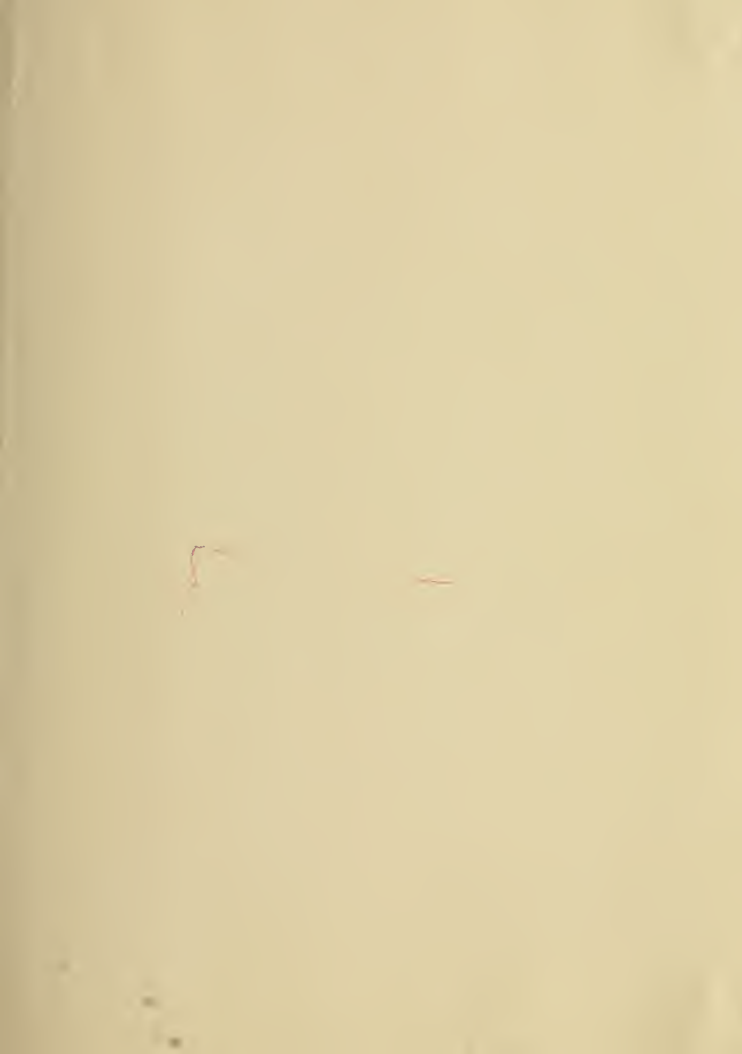
ROBIN

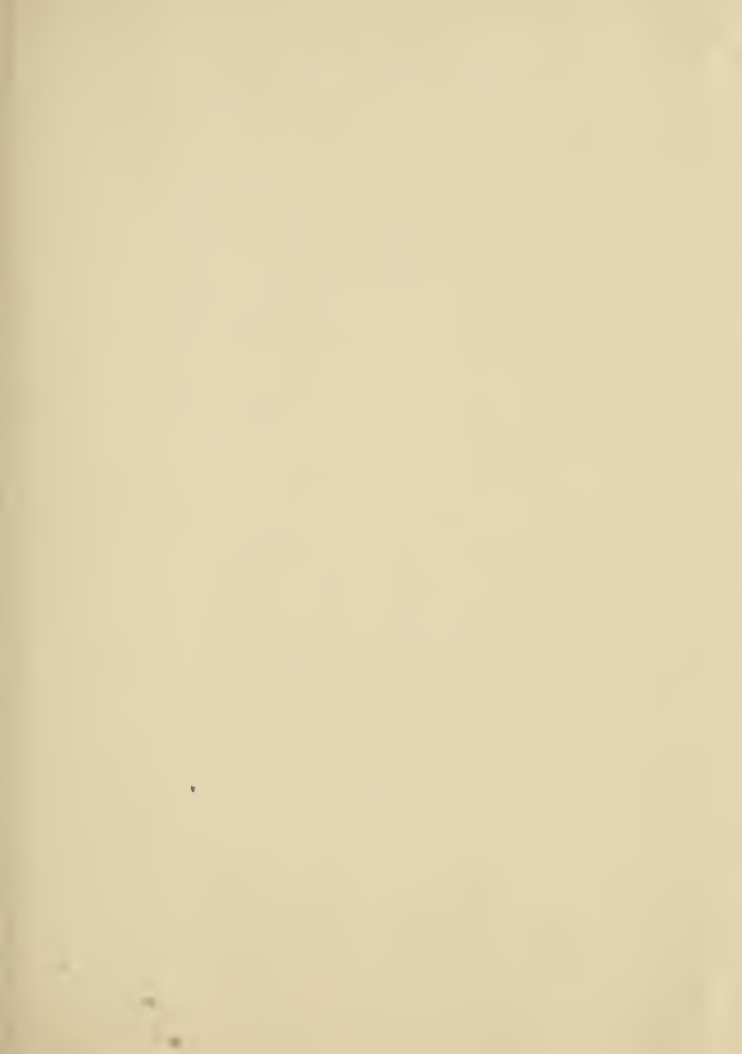
I am a fortunate man. For to-day I have gained for my band two of the best men in all England. Come. Let us go into the depths of Sherwood and make ready for our feast.

END OF THE PLAY



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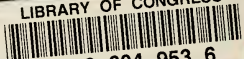
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